

The State required all towns to contribute to the war effort by supplying money, goods and fighting men. Here is an excerpt from the State Records.

[4-174] [COL. ABRAHAM DRAKE'S REG.—STAFF ROLL.]		
Pay Roll of One Months Advance Wages of the Officers of Col Abraham Drakes Regiment of Newhampshire Militia, paid them by the State before they marched to Join the Continental Army in the Northern department at Saratoga September 1777		
NAMES	Rank	One Months advance wages pd by the State
Abraham Drake	Colonel	22.10.0
Jacob Gale	Lt Col	18. 0.0
Mark Wiggin	Major	0. 0.0
Levi Dearborn	Surgeon	18. 0.0
Nathaniel Bachellor	Adjutant	12. 0.0
Thomas Leavitt	Qr Master	8. 5.0
4 Captains	at £12	48. 0.0
8 Lieutenants	at 8.2.0	64.16.0
4 Ensigns	at £6.0.0	24. 0.0
		£215.11.0
The Amount of this Roll being Two hundred and Fifteen Pounds Eleven Shillings is deducted from the foot of the General Abstract of my Regiment paid by Mr Below A. P. M. G. at Kingstreet in the State of New York Decr 1777 Copy exd J Gilman		

In some quartermaster records, the men were listed as to town of origin, age, and even indicated color of hair and eyes as means of identification if killed in action (no dog tags).

Legend has it that after Benedict Arnold ‘turned his coat,’ he asked of an American captive, “If I were captured, what would they do to me?” The soldier answered, “We’d cut off your leg and bury it with full military honors and hang the rest of you!” (Referring to his bravery and bullet wound through his boot at the Battle of Bemis Heights.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ,look for our future web site updates on the NORTH HAMPTON web site

HERITAGE COMMISSION page
www.northhampton-nh.gov

Contact the Heritage Commission (Town Office) if you have historical information on your home. If you have historical artifacts to donate, please contact the North Hampton Historical Society.

References will be listed on the web site.

North Hampton Militia

Victory at

2nd Battle of Saratoga

The Battle of Bemis Heights

October 7, 1777



“Before the Battle” (detail) North Hampton Militia with Artillery

Captain Moses Leavitt led his company of officers, non-commissioned officers and 59 privates (totaling 72 men), as one of four companies in Colonel Abraham Drake’s Regiment (317 troops) in General Ebenezer Learned’s brigade. North Hampton men are depicted in the scene above, leaving the American camp after transferring the cannons to the artillery division at Bemis Heights. The Militia and Continentals met the enemy in battle on October 7th, 1777 and forced them to retreat and surrender 5,700 British and German forces on October 17, 1777, thus winning the victory at Saratoga.



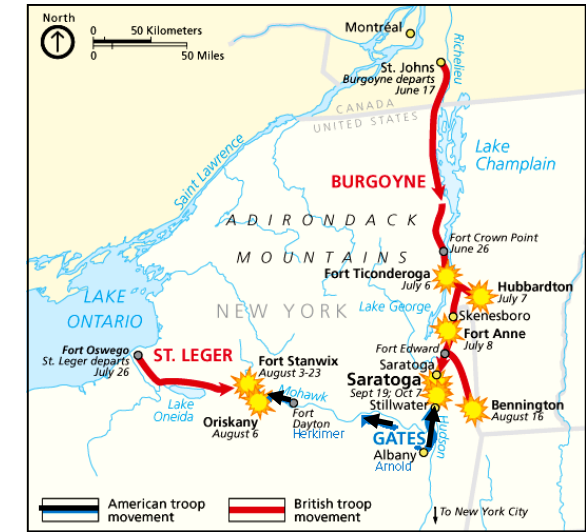
The men of North Hampton fought in one of the most decisive victories in American and world history—the second battle of Saratoga at Bemis Heights, during the American Revolutionary War, October 7th, 1777.

North Hampton Recruits Soldiers and Delivers Cannons

North Hampton’s Colonel Abraham Drake raised a regiment of 317 men, including Captain Moses Leavitt’s company. He sent his men to each fort and shore battery in the seacoast region for every available cannon. Cannons of various sizes were brought from the New Hampshire seacoast, Kittery, Maine, and Newburyport and Salem, Mass., and other locales. Traveling 318 miles, this artillery was drawn by oxen from North Hampton overland to the high ground at Bemis Heights, located between Saratoga and Stillwater, New York to join General Horatio Gates’ Continentals.

Battle Summary

On July 6, 1777, the Battle of Ticonderoga was lost to British General John Burgoyne. Armed with cannons and commanding 9,000 British and Brunswick (German) troops, Burgoyne defeated the Continental Army at Hubbardton and Fort Anne within the next two days. British forces were to converge on Albany from the north along the Hudson River (Burgoyne), the west from Lake Ontario (Colonel Barry St. Leger) and the south from New York City by Sir Henry Clinton.



The “rebels” had to stop Burgoyne from reaching Albany. Losing Albany could separate New England, the birthplace of the Revolution, from the southern provinces, thus potentially ending the “rebellion.” It was essential that the Northern Continental Army get cannons and reinforcements.

The British army became weaker as time passed. The Americans had destroyed the crops and scattered the livestock of the loyalist farmers along the Hudson in advance of Burgoyne’s troops. Burgoyne was running out of supplies. He ordered an attack upon the American supply depot at Bennington, a strategy which was a disaster—the British losing 800 men due to John Stark’s New Hampshire forces.

At the first battle of Saratoga on September 19th, at Freeman Farm, the Americans were unable to force the British to retreat, due to near exhaustion of ammunition and the arrival of the Germans, reinforcing Burgoyne’s army.



The British waited three weeks for Clinton’s reinforcements from New York, which never came.

During this break between battles, Major General Horatio Gates, commander of American Forces at Saratoga, sent word that additional forces and cannons were badly needed to stop Burgoyne from controlling the Hudson. American militias began to arrive, including Col. Drake, Capt. Leavitt, and their volunteers (many from North Hampton), who were part of Gen. Learned’s Brigade. The cannons they brought were positioned to defend the camp.



Burgoyne had to advance or retreat. Ignoring the advice of his generals, he decided to deploy a reconnaissance force of 1,500 of his best men and 8 cannons to Barber Farm, less than a mile from the American camp.

A scout returned to American headquarters, reporting the British were on the move and their front was entirely open in the field. At about 3 p.m. Gates ordered Gen. Daniel Morgan to attack. Gen. Lincoln advised to send two more columns, under Gen. Ebenezer Learned and Gen. Enoch Poor. One account said Gates eventually sent all of his troops, except for 1,000, who were left behind to guard the base camp. Gates now had a force on the field of battle of 6 to 1 against the British and German troops.

Within an hour from the start of the battle, Burgoyne lost 8 cannons and 400 officers and men. By nightfall, Gen. Burgoyne's troops had suffered 600 casualties, compared to 150 colonial casualties.

Brigadier Gen. Benedict Arnold (American), though having effectively been relieved of command by Gen. Gates due to an argument, could wait no longer to join the battle and boldly rode on to the battlefield in advance of Learned's brigade against the Germans and British. Arnold pointed out a British brigadier general, Simon Fraser, to Gen. Daniel Morgan, who ordered his riflemen to fire upon this revered leader. Tim Murphy, renowned as an Indian fighter, climbed a tree and fired three times, the last mortally wounding Fraser in the heart, demoralizing his troops.

The Americans began pushing the British back. Mounted upon his horse, Arnold charged through the crossfire of both armies, and was shot through his boot, wounding his leg. Had the wound been fatal, history would have viewed Arnold as an American hero.



The British began their retreat to the north, having suffered 1,000 casualties in the last three weeks, compared to the American's loss of fewer than 500. Leaving the camp fires burning, Burgoyne abandoned his field hospital and three hundred wounded men. Torrential rain and mud slowed Burgoyne's retreat. His troops numbered about 5,700.



In Gen. Gates' official report of the battle, he mentioned Major Henry Dearborn (North Hampton native) as having fought with valor.

By October 14th, Burgoyne had provisions for only the next 24 hours. Oxen and horses had died of starvation. Realizing the overwhelming number of the American troops, now having grown to nearly 17,000, Burgoyne surrendered October 17, 1777.

Gen. Gates' proposed terms included an unconditional surrender of all troops as prisoners of war. Burgoyne demanded his men be allowed to march out "with the Honors of War." The final Convention of Saratoga dictated the surrender to the revolutionary forces, the laying down of arms, and swearing not to serve again in the war against America. Horatio Gates' first act, after winning one of history's great military victories, was to send quantities of meat across Fishkill Creek to feed the starving enemy.

Leaving the cannons behind to continue the war effort, most of the militia recruits from North Hampton returned to their homes four months after leaving to participate in one of the most important battles of the Revolutionary War.

Americans Defeat the British Army and Win Support of France

This American victory was the pivotal event of the Revolution, convincing European observers that the American rebels could actually defeat the mighty British Army. As a result, France openly agreed to provide badly needed assistance to the Continental Army in the form of clothing, weapons, gun powder, money, army personnel, and to some extent, their navy. The British then declared war against the French, followed by war against the Spanish and Dutch, essentially engaging in a world war. The support from France was a significant factor in the defeat of the British in 1781 at Yorktown, VA, securing American independence.

North Hampton Volunteers at Saratoga-Bemis Heights

Many men from North Hampton have been identified as participating in this battle. Most of the following list served in Capt. Moses Leavitt's company. This list is not intended to be complete, as research is ongoing.

Col. Abraham Drake (B: 12/4/1715 D: 8/1/1781) began his military career as a lieutenant of cavalry in Major Tash's Battalion at Fort #4 in 1757. He served as a captain in the French and Indian Wars. He was Lieutenant Colonel in 3rd New Hampshire volunteers. He was promoted to colonel when he took command of the Second New Hampshire regiments "to reinforce the Northern Continental Army at Stillwater." Col. Abraham Drake and his son, Private Jonathan Drake, were present at Burgoyne's surrender October 17, 1777. He was a member of the Provincial Congress held at Exeter in 1777. (Monument at Drake Farm on Rte. 1.)



Major Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) also served as a general in the War of 1812. He was Secretary of War (1801-1809) for President Jefferson, then was Minister to Portugal 1822-1824.

Captain John Dearborn, Henry Dearborn's brother, served at Bennington, arriving at Bemis Heights 10/16/1777.

Dr. Levi Dearborn (1747-1832) became a surgeon in approx. 1767. He enlisted 5/1775 under Capt. Kinsman, who served with Col. Stark for 8 months. In June 1776, he transferred to Henry Dearborn's company. In 1778 he was a Delegate to the Constitutional Convention. He was buried at North Hill Center Cemetery, North Hampton, N.H.

Capt. Moses Leavitt (11/5/1742-1803) led a company to Bemis Heights in Col. Drake's Regiment. Prior to that battle, he was a 1st Lt. 2nd New Hampshire (1775) Capt. Henry Elkins Company Col Enoch Poor's Regiment's march to Charlestown. He was promoted to Capt. 18th Continental Infantry in 1776. He served as Captain in the NH Militia 1777-1780 and on the North Hampton's Safety Committee in 1777. Shortly after Bemis Heights, he served at the defense of West Point. He was a Selectman 1779-1780. Prior to his death at age 60, he was commissioned as general. He was buried at Center Cemetery, North Hampton, N.H.

Quartermaster Thomas Leavitt was 10/5/1744. He was a Lt. of Poor's NH Regiment 1775, 2nd Lt. under Capt. Nathan Hobbs at Peirce's Island, a captain in NH Militia in 1775, and promoted to Major in 1796. Prior to 1824, he made colonel. He was a North Hampton Selectman 1791-1797 and 1799-1804. Colonel Thomas Leavitt and Capt. John Dearborn presented the tribute to Lafayette in North Hampton 1824.

Fifer Samuel Batchelder

Ensign Radmund Moulton was under 22 years old at the time of the battle.

Sgt. Major Samuel Wedgwood was between 32 and 37 at the time of the battle. As a teenager, he served at Crown Point.

Sgt. Benjamin Brown was under Capt. Samuel Leavitt in the French War Expedition (Col. Weare's Regiment).

Corp. Zacheus Brown served under Col. Enoch Poor in 3rd Co. of the 2nd Regiment of Foot.

Corp. John Nudd served in the 1759 French War Expedition to Canada under Capt. Samuel Leavitt. He was 35 or older at Bemis Heights.

Pvt. Thomas Batchelder; Pvt. Jonathan Drake (son of Col. Abraham Drake) 22 or younger at the time and was in several battles after Bemis Heights; **Pvt. Jeremiah Fogg; Pvt. Jonathan Knowles:** signed the Association Test; **Pvt. Thomas Lovering:** 17 at time of Bemis Heights. In 1775 he served in 3rd Company 2nd Regiment of Foot with Enoch Poor's march to Charlestown; North Hampton selectman 1800, 1801; **Pvt. Abraham Marston:** Under 22 years old at the time of the battle; petitioned State for expenses due to illness (pneumonia) during the Bemis Heights campaign; **Pvt. Levi Marston:** Age under 22 at time of battle; **Pvt. Samuel Peirson:** under 22 in 1777, became Adj. after Bemis Heights; **Pvt. Benjamin Smith; Pvt. Abraham Taylor; Pvt. John Taylor; Private Richard Taylor:** Under 22 at time of battle; **Pvt. Ebenezer Tilton.**